

# The Use of a Web Based "Intranet" System for Institutional Dissemination of Multimedia Information About Postpartum Depression

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## ABSTRACT

An Intranet based local area network (LAN) distribution of multimedia educational materials is described. The potential impact of this technology on the distribution of educational materials within an academic institution from a central server over an Intranet is discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the development of an "Intranet" application for the distribution of psychiatrically relevant information, in this case, information concerning postpartum depression within our medical institution. This application is part of a larger ongoing project to develop psychiatric mental health multimedia materials that will inform other medical practitioners about psychiatric illness and improve the quality of care of patients. It is increasingly apparent that health care costs as measured by increased utilization or relapse, is directly affected by the presence of psychiatric conditions. Therefore, the ability to identify and either treat or make appropriate referrals is absolutely necessary for this population to provide care that is clinically sound as well as fiscally responsible.

The challenge in many institutions such as ours is the dissemination of state of the art information. Furthermore, psychiatric information is constrained by issues of confidentiality. These circumstances have lead to our developing an "Intranet" which can limit distribution of the information to the University while allowing easy access to our clinicians and patients.

## DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The "Intranet" project encompasses three phases from the development of multi-media based materials to the transfer of these materials to a "webserver" for broad dissemination.

Phase I involved the selection of a mental health topic that was significant to professionals in a primary care setting. We chose postpartum

depression, a disturbance effecting approximately 12-15% of women following delivery. Our target audience included obstetricians, pediatricians, other primary care clinicians, their patients and families. Astound, a multimedia based presentation software package was used for the Phase 1 authorizing application due to its ease of use and features. Since its development, the presentation has been given to a number of audiences in our medical facility and was extremely well received.

Phase 2 has involved the transfer of material developed within Astound to an authoring program that permitted dissemination via Netscape.2.0. New developments within Netscape have allowed for movement beyond dissemination of simple text, and have included multimedia elements to increase interactivity and enhance the educational experience of the audience.

Phase 3 - Following authoring development, the presentation was integrated into the departmental website where it could subsequently be accessed by primary care colleagues. Appropriate applications and technical assistance were made available within those sites. Education regarding the use of the tool and its marketing was initiated in the ambulatory clinics. Finally, the development of continuing psychiatric liaison allows for appropriate support and follow up of patients identified at risk and a continued consultative relationship with their primary clinicians.

## IMPACT

This integration of near "real-time" delivery of multimedia, has the promise to allow not only relevant, but timely information to be accessed in a format which will encourage its use. If video, audio, graphics can be used in this manner, respecting patients request of confidentiality, it is our belief that we can improve the education of primary care clinicians and facilitate care delivery that is clinically well informed at modest expense.